



Education support for children with special needs

Defence Community Organisation

Defence Community Organisation supports families with children who have special needs to help overcome educational difficulties they may experience when changing schools due to posting.

DEPENDANTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A child recognised as a dependant with special needs may be entitled to education assistance for tuition and services related to their particular needs. This includes children who are academically gifted.

Support may be available when a program or service was provided by a government school at your previous location and it cannot be provided by a government school or government agency in your new location. Assistance includes:

- a therapy service critical to your child's educational progress (one hour per week, for 14 weeks, to be completed within 18 months of starting at the new school)
- an assessment of a special need to develop a suitable educational program, where there is evidence a government agency cannot provide the assessment within six months of posting
- attendance at a private school to access a special program or service, critical to the child's educational progress
- a special education program for a child who is academically gifted.

Your child may also be eligible for tuition if their education has been disrupted by posting, to help your child meet academic standards at their new school (one hour per week, for 14 weeks, to be completed within 18 months of starting at the new school).

For further details, see the *Education Assistance Scheme – Tutoring* factsheet at www.defence.gov.au/dco.

You may also request an extension of tuition or therapy services for an additional one hour per week, per subject for up to 14 weeks, if the original period of support has been insufficient to achieve an acceptable academic standard. This additional support must also be undertaken within the 18 month period of moving to the new location.

HOW TO APPLY

You need to provide supporting evidence for each of these entitlements as detailed on the appropriate webform application:

- AD301: Assessments of special needs, and initial periods of therapy services or tuition
- AD301-1: Programs and services at a non-government school, and extensions of therapy services or tuition.



APPROVED THERAPY SERVICES

There are a range of therapy services that may be relevant to your child's educational progress. Some therapies available are:

- speech therapy
- occupational therapy
- physiotherapy.

You may also be entitled to assistance for other therapies not specific to your child's education. For more information visit www.defence.gov.au/dco/Family/Special-needs.asp

SHORTER SESSIONS

Therapy services are approved on the basis of one hour per week per therapy, for 14 weeks. However, some students may not be able to undertake hour-long sessions.

If sessions of less than an hour are undertaken, the remaining time does not accrue to extend the approval period. For example if 30-minute sessions are undertaken, this does not extend the 14-week approval period to 28 weeks.

Any time not used from the maximum one hour per week is forfeited. However, your child can receive two 30-minute sessions each week for the same therapy.

MAKE-UP SESSIONS

If you miss a session due to illness, school holidays or scheduling conflicts, you have 18 months from the time your child commenced at their new school to complete therapy services.

While services are approved for a 14-week period, it does not need to be undertaken in consecutive weeks. This allows you to spread the load across several therapies if necessary. However, it is not possible to reimburse more than one hour per week per therapy to allow for a 'make-up' session.

DEFINITION OF A WEEK

A week is considered to be Monday to Sunday. That is, a session on Sunday followed by another session on Monday are considered to be across two weeks.

REIMBURSEMENT

Education assistance is a reimbursement scheme where parents or carers pay for the therapy and then seek reimbursement.

[PACMAN Chapter 8, Part 4, Division 2](#) sets out the maximum reimbursement amount for each form of education assistance, which may be less than the costs incurred.

You may seek reimbursement as often as necessary to reduce the financial burden of incurring the cost of therapy services.

For educational programs, reimbursements are made as fees become payable.

So you can be reimbursed promptly, send your invoices and receipts together with a covering note detailing the services you are seeking reimbursement for to education.supportprograms@defence.gov.au

Invoices and receipts submitted must be addressed to you and contain:

- the service provider's name and ABN
- the service provider's qualifications/accreditation
- the date the invoice was issued
- details of the services received, such as the type of therapy service, date of session, duration of session, hourly rate and GST
- details of tuition and/or program fees for educational programs at a non-government school.

Proof of payment may be in the form of matching receipts or bank statements that clearly show the movement of funds from your account to the service provider's.

Note: You are responsible for advising whether any other reimbursements have been deducted or may be claimed for these services.

Defence Community Organisation offers a wide range of support services to ADF members and their families.

For more information on this factsheet email education.supportprograms@defence.gov.au.

For more information on Defence Community Organisation support services visit www.defence.gov.au/dco or call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

